



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



December 12, 2005

James E. Hartl, AICP
Director of Planning

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

Approve the attached proposed amendment to Title 22--Planning and Zoning Ordinance of the Los Angeles County Code--to exempt Board of Supervisors and Regional Planning Commission-initiated zoning matters from current public hearing notice sign posting requirements.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Current Zoning Ordinance provisions require applicants for zoning applications subject to a public hearing to post public hearing notice signs on each affected property along each public road that fronts the property.

This proposed ordinance amendment would relieve the County from such requirements for zoning matters initiated by the Board of Supervisors and the Regional Planning Commission, because the large number of properties and large acreages generally affected would render these requirements infeasible and impractical to implement in such instances. The posting requirements would be retained for zoning matters initiated by private individuals, which generally address a smaller number of properties and acreages.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The proposed ordinance amendment would contribute to the Countywide Strategic Plan goal of organizational effectiveness. The attached public hearing notice sign posting amendment would retain adequate public notice for Board- and Commission-initiated zoning matters through required public ads placed in newspapers of general circulation, notices to surrounding property owners, notices to other interested persons who request it, and notice and public hearing packages sent to the County's libraries. At the same time the County would not be burdened with posting notices for each and every lot affected by a Board or Commission-

staff freer to deal with other more important zoning matters, including service to private zoning applicants.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

Exempting Board and Commission-initiated zoning matters from the current requirements for public hearing notice sign posting would save the County significant costs associated with man-power and materials needed to post such signs. The proposed amendment would not require financing of any kind.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Staff is suggesting that Board and Commission-initiated zoning matters be exempted from the current public hearing notice sign posting requirements because these requirements are impractical and infeasible to implement for such matters. Such zoning matters are generally initiated to achieve zoning consistency with the General Plan's land use designations most often over a very large number of properties and very large acreages.

For instance, this Department is currently undertaking two such Plan-related projects—an update of the Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program and an update of the Countywide General Plan. Both of these Plans will require subsequent changes of zone for many properties in order to achieve zoning consistency with the Plans' new land use designations. Under the current Zoning Ordinance provisions, the County would be required to post public hearing notice signs on each affected property along adjoining roads, requiring the posting of hundreds, if not thousands of such signs. Such a requirement is unrealistic, impractical and very costly to the County.

Additionally, the Zoning Ordinance currently contains other mechanisms to ensure satisfactory public notice of zoning application public hearings. Such requirements include public notice ads in a newspaper of general circulation in the affected area, notices mailed to property owners within 500 feet of the project property, notices mailed to other constituents and community groups who request it, and notices and related public hearing packages sent to libraries in the affected areas. Thus, exemption of Board- and Commission-initiated zoning matters from public hearing notice posting requirements would not preclude adequate public notice of related public hearings.

Approval of the proposed amendment does not require a public hearing because it would implement a procedural change that does not constitute a land use regulation.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

Staff concludes that there is no substantial evidence that adoption of the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment may have a significant effect on the environment. Accordingly, staff has determined that the amendment is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061 of the CEQA Guidelines,

which states that "...CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA." Additionally, exempting Board- and Commission-initiated zoning matters from the public hearing sign posting requirements would reduce the number of signs cluttering the roads along affected properties, and thus may have a positive impact on the environment.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

The proposed amendment would relieve the County from certain public hearing notice posting obligations, freeing up this Department's resources to provide better services and projects to the public.

CONCLUSION

This proposed amendment to exempt Board of Supervisors- and Regional Planning Commission-initiated zoning matters from impractical public hearing notice sign posting requirements will reduce costs to the County and this Department while still maintaining adequate public notice for public hearings on such matters. Additionally, the current public hearing notice requirements will be still applicable to private projects for which they are more appropriate. For these reasons, staff recommends that your Board adopt the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING



James E. Hartl, AICP
Director of Planning

JEH:RDH:LE:MK

Attachments

C: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors